



Davenport Community Rail Overpass

Davenport Community Rail Overpass *Reference Panel Final Day Report – June 6, 2015*

On the morning of Saturday, June 6th, 2015, members of the Metrolinx Davenport Community Rail Overpass Residents' Reference Panel returned to the Davenport Perth Community Health Centre for their final day together. After a productive meeting only one week before, the Panelists came ready to put forward their fresh ideas, revisions and final recommendations. Panel Chair, Peter MacLeod, welcomed panelists to Day Four noting that after weeks of hard work, "today is the finale when it all comes together".

Returning to their thematic groups, panelists revisited the ideas they had shared with one another during the previous Saturday. These groups included: 'history, heritage and culture', 'overall connectivity', 'lighting, safety and security', 'timing of the project and sequencing', 'year-round use and seasonality', 'long-term sustainability and stewardship'. After 90 minutes of focused discussion, a representative from each group presented their ideas for feedback from other panelists.

Generally, the panelists were encouraging, but they also sought more information, pressing one another to draft more detailed recommendations. Occasionally, a panelist would flag a detail or issue that might have been easily overlooked by anyone but a nearby resident. Overall, they were supportive of recommendations that increased connections between the site and other park spaces or thoroughfares. They urged Metrolinx to develop a plan that could with time be expanded to other active transportation routes.

Panelists also grappled with what some perceived as trade-offs between cost and community safety. For instance, should emergency buttons be placed along the corridor at a time when many people carry cell phones? Other panelists focused on the governance of the site, asking whether a local 'stewardship council' and charter might help to ensure stronger community ownership for the site and its development.

Following their presentations, the panelists resumed their work incorporating the feedback they had received. Some groups elected to send representatives to other groups to address specific issues and resolving some overlap between their recommendations.

With their thematic recommendations complete, the panel broke for a celebratory lunch. Portuguese grilled chicken, fish and salad replaced the sandwiches that the panelists ate during their first three meals together.

Following lunch, a final set of working groups was formed. One group began drafting the preamble, which explained why the members had volunteered and how their recommendations should be read. Another group returned to the original values



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exercise from their first session to draft clearer definitions that would give readers a better sense of the panelists' priorities.

A third group combed through hundreds of images to select photos from other projects that illustrate the design qualities they like best. Lastly, two groups reviewed the full set of zone and thematic recommendations to eliminate any unnecessary repetition and address any remaining gaps. Again, each group took turns sharing their progress with the other members of the panel before finalizing their work.

Before the day concluded, the chair acted on the suggestion of one panelist to hold a brief in-camera session without representatives from Metrolinx or other observers in the room. As the panelist noted, it was important that all members have a chance to talk amongst themselves before finalizing their recommendations.

Once again, several panelists voiced their concern about the timetable for electrification, noting that any delay or expanded use of diesel locomotives would likely harm public confidence in the project. Others also underscored that their participation on the panel should not be equated with their support for the overpass, stating that in the absence of other options they had elected to participate to make the best of it by mitigating any negative impacts.

With this private session concluded, the chair prepared the panelists to present highlights of their recommendations to senior Metrolinx staff, including President and CEO Bruce McQuaig and local elected officials.

Representatives from all three levels of government, including Ward 18 City Councilor Ana Bailao, MPP Christina Martins, and MP Andrew Cash, joined the panelists to hear their recommendations. Taking turns, ten panelists read selections from the final recommendations including the preamble text, the guiding values, as well as several themes and design priorities for each of the five geographic zones.

Following their presentation, Bruce McCuaig, thanked the Panel for their hard work saying, "by learning from each other we've come up with something really powerful". McCuaig said that Metrolinx was very impressed and grateful for the panel's guidance, and assured them that their recommendations will be considered closely. "You have my strong commitment", he told the Panel, "that we will respect and respond to all the recommendations moving forward."

Each elected representative was then invited to address the Panel. They took the opportunity to thank the Panelists for their work and for the significant time they committed to serving their community. They also explained for they will continue to watch this project closely and ensure that it reflects the interests of the Davenport community.



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To close the day, Bruce McCuaig presented each panelist with a “Certificate of Public Service” in acknowledgement of their commitment to the process and their community. In closing, MacLeod reminded the group that each Panel member would have the chance to review a draft of the final report and make any edits or additional suggestions before it is presented to Metrolinx and the community. If any member of the Panel felt they were not in agreement with the draft set of recommendations, they were invited to submit a “minority report” to be included in the final document. With a final thanks, the Panel adjourned.

Next Steps:

After their final meeting, the Panelists will work over email and phone to edit and approve the Final Report of Residents’ Reference Panel on the Davenport Community Rail Overpass, with the support of panel facilitators. The Panelists were also invited to attend the Final Report launch later in June to present their recommendations to other local residents.